

INSPECTION REPORT

STANDENS BARN LOWER SCHOOL

Standens Barn, Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121935

Headteacher: Mrs S L Stokes

Reporting inspector: Mrs Brenda Iles
12000

Dates of inspection: 19th March to 22nd March 2001

Inspection number: 206590

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Flaxwell Court Standens Barn Northampton
Postcode:	NN3 9EH
Telephone number:	01604 413151
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Bowles
Date of previous inspection:	14 th September 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12000	Brenda Iles	Registered inspector	English Art and design	What the school should do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed English as an additional language
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
20350	Vivien Davies	Team inspector	Physical education Religious education	Foundation stage Special educational needs
20911	Judith Dawson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music	How well does the school care for its pupils
27206	Margaret Debrou	Team Inspector	Science Design and technology Geography History	Equal opportunities How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Standens Barn Lower School serves the local community of the Standens Barn Estate in Northampton. The majority of pupils live in the surrounding areas. Families live in a mixture of privately owned and rented housing, including a significant proportion of pupils who have been rehoused. Fewer parents than usual have higher education qualifications. Pupils are admitted to the reception class at the start of the year in which they become five. Attainment on entry shows variations between cohorts and a broad range but overall the outcomes are in line with the local average.

Two hundred and twenty eight girls and boys aged from four to nine attend the school, which is about average. This is slightly lower than at the time of the last report but numbers are increasing again as the school gains in popularity. Forty-eight children were in the reception classes at the time of the inspection. Nine per cent of pupils take free school meals although a higher proportion is entitled to this support. Five per cent of pupils come from backgrounds beyond Europe and 20 pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. Almost a fifth of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the usual transfer and admissions times. This figure is much higher than usual. The school admits refugees from Eastern Europe and also integrates successfully pupils excluded from other schools. Seventy-nine pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is above average, and one pupil has a statement. Staff illness resulted in some classes being taught by temporary teachers at the time of the inspection.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standens Barn Lower School provides a caring learning environment and a sound quality of education. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher who is well supported by staff and governors who work as a committed, enthusiastic team. There is a clear understanding of the school priorities. Teaching is of good quality in literacy and numeracy and a fifth of lessons have very good and excellent features. Standards are average and are improving in the important areas of English and mathematics. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading are above average at the ages of seven and nine.
- The headteacher provides clear direction and effective leadership and is well supported by staff and governors.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning has effectively supported raising standards.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are very well cared for.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT)
- The quality and use of assessment to set specific learning targets for pupils and raise standards
- The quality of teaching where pupils are taught by temporary and supply staff.
- The provision for children in the reception classes

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Good progress has been made in addressing the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection in September 1998. The quality of teaching is now much better and standards have risen to average levels by the ages of seven and nine in English, mathematics and science. The school has very recently been informed that it is one of the most improved schools in the country in recognition of these achievements. The headteacher has provided very clear direction and governors and staff are fully involved in decision making. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and almost all of the many key issues have been successfully tackled. The school improvement plan is a shared document that identifies priorities clearly and guides school developments effectively. The curriculum is well planned to support teaching and learning and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively. Pupils are usually appropriately challenged although there is scope to extend the achievement of higher attaining pupils in mathematics, science and ICT. Teacher assessment is still not used sufficiently well to set precise targets for learning. Standards in ICT remain below average but recent developments and the arrival of new computers are enabling this identified school priority to be addressed. The accurate identification of future priorities show there is a clear understanding of how the school can continue to improve. The school no longer has serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	B	B	C
Writing	D	C	C	C
Mathematics	D	C	D	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

Average C

below average D

well below average E

The recent results of seven-year-olds in national tests show an overall improvement in reading and writing. Variations in mathematics results reflect inconsistent provision to extend fully the achievements of higher attaining pupils.

The school has a much higher proportion of transient pupils than average which affects standards in subjects from year to year. Inspection evidence shows good improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science compared to the last report. More pupils now achieve average and higher than average levels at the ages of seven and nine and the progress made over time is good.

The priorities and targets set by the school have been achieved and there is a commitment to raise standards higher. Inspection evidence shows that most seven and nine-year-olds achieve standards that are above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. However, not all pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable because teachers do not use their assessments to generate precise learning targets for pupils, especially the more able. At both seven and nine, standards in art and design, design

and technology, history, geography and physical education are average. In music standards rise from the expected level at seven to above average levels at nine. Standards in ICT are below average. Attainment in religious education meets the expectations of the local syllabus.

By the end of the reception year most children attain levels appropriate for their age in language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development.

Good progress has been made in improving standards in English, mathematics and science and more pupils are likely to achieve the higher grades and levels this year. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are appropriately challenged and make good gains in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and in the playground is mainly good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are of very good quality and support pupils' personal development well.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

The care shown to pupils is very good. The good relationships, knowledge of individual needs and support for pupils with specific needs enables pupils to feel valued and succeed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a strength of the school. Excellent and very good teaching was observed in just over a quarter of lessons and in a further quarter of lessons the teaching was good. The remainder was mainly satisfactory. In the four unsatisfactory lessons (ten per cent) observed supply teachers and part time staff did not manage pupils' behaviour well. Curriculum guidance helps teachers to plan lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils, especially those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. The support given to these pupils is very good and supports their learning well, especially in literacy and mathematics. More able pupils are now challenged to reach the higher levels of achievement, particularly in literacy. The teaching of phonics and reading are strengths and this enables pupils to use this knowledge in their writing. This is why standards have improved in these aspects of English.

The teaching of children in reception classes is satisfactory overall but lacks the clear guidance and leadership given in the infants and juniors.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and of good quality.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good and supports learning very effectively
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good and pupils make good progress
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well cared for.

The curriculum is well planned but the timetabling arrangements result in some lessons in English and mathematics being too long which restrict the amount of time to apply the skills and knowledge across subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhances provision. Staff know pupils very well and child protection arrangements are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff. There is a shared vision for school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and give good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Self-review and evaluation is good and there is a clear understanding of the school's priorities.
The strategic use of resources	The school's finances are managed very well. Resources are used effectively to support learning.

There is an appropriate number of staff to meet the demands of the curriculum but staff illness has resulted in gaps in subject leadership in religious education and the management of the foundation stage of learning. The strengths of staff and governors are used effectively to enhance school improvement. The school plan provides a very clear outline for future improvements and there is shared commitment to achieve the agreed priorities. The principles of best value are applied appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school and enjoy learning.• Children make good progress• Teaching is good• The school handles complaints and suggestions well.• The school is well led and managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework• The ways in which the school communicates with parents• The range of extra-curricular activities

Inspectors support parents' positive comments. The criticisms are not upheld by inspection evidence. The range of clubs and provision to enhance the curriculum is good and the school contributes regularly to local festivals and performances. The range and amount of homework is appropriate and enhances learning in literacy and numeracy. The school provides good quality information through reports, newsletters and curriculum information. Some parents would like more notice to plan for the payment of educational visits and the school is considering how it can meet this request.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds pupils' attainment was above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, performance was average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. A higher proportion of pupils gained the higher levels in reading than in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science showed that achievements were about average and that the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level was also average. When compared to similar schools, fewer pupils than average gained the higher level. Trends over time show that standards are gradually improving. Comparisons of the progress of cohorts from baseline assessment to the age of seven should be treated with some caution. The school has a much higher level of transient pupils than is usual and the proportion of admissions of pupils excluded from other schools and refugees have increased. The school very recently won a national award for being one of the most improved schools in the country. The priority to increase the number of pupils who achieve the higher grades and levels is being addressed systematically and successfully.
2. The most recent optional test results for nine-year-olds show that the improved quality of teaching is raising standards. Three quarters of pupils reached age related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics with a quarter achieving more highly in reading and a third reaching the higher level 4 in mathematics. Optional tests for science are to be introduced this year. The school has set challenging targets for seven and nine-year-olds which it is likely to meet. The strength of teaching in literacy and numeracy is the main reason for these improvements. The analysis of work of pupils who have been on the school's roll since the age of seven indicates they have made very good progress. Attainment has risen to appropriate levels for the age and capabilities of the pupils and there are no longer serious concerns about standards.
3. The analysis of local baseline assessment results in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics is similar to that of most four-year-olds. However, these results vary from year to year and as the school is beginning to grow in popularity again, there are indications that the proportions of more able children have increased since the last report when attainment on entry was below average. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress during the reception years and most, including those with English as an additional language, are likely to achieve the expectations of the national early learning goals by the end of the year. Staff illness has resulted in some discontinuity in provision and this has slowed the pace of learning overall. However, the arrangements made by the school have ensured children receive a sound quality of education.
4. Inspection evidence shows that by the ages of seven and nine standards in speaking and listening, mathematics and science are average. Achievements in reading are above average for both age groups and a higher proportion of seven year-olds are likely to achieve the higher grades in writing this year. The very good programme of phonics teaching and precise setting of targets in this aspect of learning are helping to raise standards well. Most teachers use subject specific vocabulary and questioning techniques effectively. Consequently pupils develop confidence to use these terms in their responses and writing. Achievements in

information and communication technology (ICT) are below the expected levels at seven and nine and this weakness, identified in the last report, continues to be a key issue for the school to address. It is already prioritised and forms a significant part of the school improvement plan. Problems, beyond the school's control, in setting up the computer suite have inhibited the rate of progress and staff training in this subject. Pupils' achievements in music meet the expectations of the National Curriculum for seven-year-olds and exceed age-related expectations by the time they are nine. In art and design, design and technology, history, geography and physical education pupils' achievements are similar to most seven and nine-year-olds. In religious education they match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

5. The issues of raising standards are being addressed systematically and there has been a good rate of improvement since the last report, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The majority of pupils now reach average levels. Although the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher levels in the tests is frequently below that of similar schools the number is increasing as pupils who have benefited from the better quality teaching move through the school. The setting of targets for groups and individuals, which is currently the practice only for pupils with special educational needs, is an issue for the school to address to raise achievements further. Teachers now have higher expectations of pupils. They explain the focus of learning for each lesson and set homework that supports learning beyond the classroom. Together with the good relationships and establishment of trust and respect pupils are well motivated to learn. Parents are pleased with their children's progress and also feel the school's approaches have improved considerably under the leadership of the headteacher.
6. The focus to improve attainment in reading has been successful. By the age of seven pupils enjoy a wide range of stories, poems and information books. They are enthusiastic and know the purpose of different books, using terms such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry in their descriptions. Their good knowledge of phonics is used well to decode new words. Higher attainers read fluently and expressively and even those who are less skilled try hard to read with expression. By the age of nine many pupils read avidly and describe favourite authors and books, for example, Dick King Smith, Roald Dahl and J.K Rowling. Pupils read fluently and accurately and their research skills are well developed. They understand how to use dictionaries and encyclopaedias and compare the styles of poetry introduced through the literacy hour. The minor weakness in English at times relates to speaking skills when pupils are not required to pronounce words accurately in their questions and answers. This then leads to inaccurate spelling in independent writing. Where teachers make good use of Standard English, pupils' speech and spelling is more consistently accurate. Writing is improving and a higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve the higher grades. Achievements are also at least average by the time pupils leave the school and there is a good range and amount of writing in pupils' books. The strengths are the use of punctuation and the progress made in writing descriptive sentences that increase in complexity as pupils apply their knowledge of connectives, adjectives and character profiles. More pupils are likely to achieve the higher levels and grades this year than previously. A small number of pupils use a restricted range of language and their patterns of speech are not always grammatically correct. These pupils receive very good support. Some are new to the school and require time to adapt to the different culture and the teaching and learning expectations made of them.

7. In mathematics, seven and nine-year-old pupils use their knowledge of mathematical processes to find the most appropriate methods to calculate and solve problems. By the age of seven they count in twos, fives and tens and more able pupils also count confidently in threes and fours. Pupils accurately select the simplest and quickest methods to make mental calculations. Those with special needs receive very good support and apply their knowledge at the appropriate level. Pupils in Year 4 use multiplication tables in problem solving situations, for example when constructing charts where a square represents more than one object. The emphasis and good teaching of mental arithmetic at the beginning of each lesson has had a positive impact on extending pupils' numeracy skills, especially in the juniors, where standards have risen considerably since the last inspection.
8. Pupils in Year 2 add and subtract within 100 while more able pupils work confidently with larger numbers and are beginning to identify doubles. They have a growing understanding of place value and accurately identify the value of two-digit numbers. They solve simple money problems using sums up to a pound. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special needs work with smaller amounts. By Year 4, pupils solve written problems involving the use of four or five-digit numerals. They sort fractions in order of size and use decimals to solve money problems. Pupils round up or down to the nearest 10 or 100 and are beginning to use negative numbers to read temperature scales and to solve mental problems. All pupils understand the relationship between addition and subtraction and most pupils know how to check their calculations.
9. Pupils develop a good understanding of investigative science. Through practical experiences they make good use of specific vocabulary, for example, Year 2 pupils are able to explain that the wind is a "force that moves things" and know that objects can be moved by pushing and pulling. In Year 4 a pupil correctly changed his use of the word "particle" to "crystal" and when making night-lights they understand how the electric circuit works and define a battery as 'a cell which gives energy'. They understand that some objects reflect light and that cellophane is transparent while tissue paper is translucent. This knowledge was applied well to their design and technology task. In their work on separating solids, Year 4 pupils also made good use of their previous investigations when discovering how heating or cooling changes solids. The minor weakness lies in providing provide more challenge for higher attaining pupils by creating regular opportunities for them to devise their own investigations.
10. Skills in ICT are below those expected at the ages of seven and nine. The new computers and computer suite have only recently been installed and not all teachers have received the training to enable them to maximise their use. Consequently, standards are still below average. Pupils are frequently taught new tasks away from the screens due to the limited access to the computers. A trained support assistant takes groups of pupils from each class to the ICT suite to practise the skills they have learnt. This is effectively supporting teaching and learning. There are some aspects of the subject in both the infants and the juniors in which the pupils reach the appropriate levels. Most pupils in Year 2 use the mouse to drag and drop icons or text, matching text to pictures. They make lists to sort objects and use programs to draw and fill their designs. They select the appropriate tools to divide a page in two, to draw pictures, fill and erase. Most pupils know how to save their work to disk. They do not yet use word processing with confidence and many are still not sure of the names of the function keys, for example, space bar, enter and shift. They have little experience of using the CD-ROM in school. Pupils in Year 4 have not yet accessed the Internet or CD-ROM for

research purposes although a small proportion have access to the Internet at home. However, they use database programs to support their work in mathematics and enter data and display the results in different ways. They have created graphics in the style of Seurat, and used a repeating pattern to design a prayer mat. Pupils have also programmed the computer to draw a route using Logo. Good cross-curricular links are evident and relevant. Although much of this work meets the expectations for pupils in Year 4, the lack of Internet, e-mail and research skills are weaknesses. However, there has been significant progress in the subject since the last inspection and the school improvement plan indicates how the weaknesses identified are being addressed systematically. Pupils with special needs and English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers, having appropriate support to meet their individual needs.

11. In religious education pupils develop a sound knowledge of the major world faiths. Through the study of world religions pupils recognise similarities and differences between world faiths such as Islam and Christianity. They know that people worship in different ways and that, while in some religions people worship more than one God, the values of caring and helping others are common. Teachers make good use of resources and pupils accurately describe some of the symbols of each faith and specific aspects of prayer and worship.
12. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language progress very well because of the very good support offered. The co-ordinator and teachers devise individual education plans that have appropriate and clear targets that address pupils' difficulties effectively. Support assistants are well briefed and their focused intervention links well to the coverage of work within classes, enabling pupils to have equal access to the full curriculum. This secures effective learning in relation to prior attainment. Pupils support each other well. For example, in one class a Year 1 pupil realised how to blend three letter words for the first time. The class shared his joy in the achievement. In another class a pupil with behaviour difficulties was able to co-operate with three other pupils who accommodated and supported him so that they produced a complex and well timed group gymnastic display. Another pupil working in a large mixed ability group made very good progress blending sounds successfully because simple visual resources were used well. These examples reflect the high quality of the work programmes that match the pupils' needs very precisely so they experience success regularly. This promotes positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' good attitudes to school, good behaviour and personal development have a positive impact on their achievements at the school. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is clearly evident in their attitudes throughout the school day; in over two-thirds of lessons observed attitudes to learning were at least good. Children in the reception classes are keen to undertake activities and readily chat about what they are doing. As they progress through the school they show good interest in their work and get on with tasks eagerly. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are directly linked to the standard of teaching. They are best when teaching is lively and stimulating. For example, in a Year 3 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson pupils produced a very good musical composition due to the interest and enthusiasm encouraged by the teacher. Attitudes deteriorate in a few lessons where pupils are

taught by teachers who do not know them well and do not teach them on a regular basis.

14. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes, in assembly, around the school and in the playground is good. A few incidents of over-zealous behaviour, mainly from boys, occur but these are handled well by staff. The absence of oppressive, racist or sexist behaviour is a feature of the school. There have been no permanent or temporary exclusions over the past two years, a figure well below average for primary schools and a clear indicator of the positive way staff strive to include all pupils. Pupils know the school rules well and have an increasingly good awareness of how their behaviour impacts on others. They are polite and friendly. Their personal development is good. They express their feelings well. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson pupils tell the class what makes them happy or sad using a wide range of often moving experiences. They are proud of their achievements and those of others, for example, in a Year 4 music lesson pupils glowed with achievement when praised for the improvement made in their singing. Pupils take on a range of jobs and duties willingly and helpfully. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils work and play together very well; the positive relationships between the staff and pupils make a major contribution towards pupils' learning. This gives pupils the confidence to contribute in lessons and ask questions to staff.
15. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the same degree of responsibility as other pupils. Small duties including register, milk and equipment distribution are shared on a rota basis amongst all pupils. Pupils, including those in reception, are helped to become responsible for personal needs including their hygiene.
16. Attendance levels are satisfactory, being at about the national average. Accurate recording and rigorous monitoring results in unauthorised absence levels being slightly above average. Lateness is not an issue.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT

17. In half the lessons the quality of teaching is at least good and a quarter of lessons have excellent or very good features. The remainder is mainly satisfactory. One in ten lesson was unsatisfactory. The weaknesses were observed in the teaching of supply and part time teachers.
18. The quality of teaching is much higher than at the time of the last inspection when there was a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4, the teaching of numeracy was inconsistent and the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) was poor in all age groups. The rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and the provision of on-going guidance and training has resulted the improvement of staff confidence, subject expertise, behaviour management and the quality of planning. There have also been some staffing changes. Teachers now use curriculum guidance as the framework for lesson planning, to guide the teaching of knowledge and skills progressively for pupils of different ages and abilities. This is particularly effective in the teaching of literacy, phonics, numeracy and the support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Coordinators have time allocated to monitor the quality of planning and teaching and have been well supported by senior staff and the local authority. Consequently, the serious weaknesses described in the last report have been addressed and, while there remains room to improve the

satisfactory lessons to the higher standards observed in half the lessons, the school has made good progress in addressing this important issue.

19. Teachers have precise targets and timescales to improve aspects of their lessons and this has enabled them to recognise the strengths and weaknesses in the strategies they use. Courses to support their professional development and visits to observe leading teachers for literacy and numeracy have also been a feature of raising the quality of teaching.
20. Staffing difficulties have resulted in discontinuity in the teaching of reception-aged children. While children receive a satisfactory quality of teaching and make steady progress, there is insufficient input by teachers to the activities organised in shared teaching space. Support staff for this age group do not receive sufficient guidance to promote children's learning fully. The illness of experienced staff and the limited experience of the permanent teacher has led to a period of discontinuity. However, teachers share planning and children are eager to learn.
21. In the excellent lessons observed in one Year 4 class and one class in Years 1 and 2 teachers had very high expectations of pupils, very secure subject knowledge and inspired pupils to learn through promoting excitement and fun in learning. They showed pupils clearly how they had improved over time and indicated precisely what they were to learn next. Senior staff present very good role models, for example in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and provide good guidance and support for less experienced staff. Overall, the strongest teaching observed was by senior teachers. In other classes teaching is either good or satisfactory with occasional very good teaching observed in literacy and ICT.
22. Where teachers plan jointly together, for example in Year 4, this ensures continuity in the coverage of the broad curriculum and in the planning of work for pupils of different abilities. Lesson objectives identify what is to be learned and are communicated clearly and precisely to pupils. In a literacy lesson the teacher explained in detail a model for writing poems building on pupils' knowledge of Haiku poems. She modelled work with them, drew attention to strengths and weaknesses in poems they had written previously and gave specific timescales for drafting and final presentation. The discussion and evaluation of pupils' work at the end of the lesson reflected very good learning. Pupils praised each other, identified the use of vocabulary they liked and ways in which their friends could improve their work. The final outcome, a book of poems about winter, reflected pride and achievement and pupils were eager to share this book with inspectors.
23. The very good teaching of phonics enables pupils to systematically use this knowledge in their reading and writing. This is raising standards in these aspects of English. Pupils make good use of this knowledge, mainly spelling words accurately and attempting to read unfamiliar words independently. This is a particular strength in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
24. Where teaching is good, pupils are well motivated and eager to meet the teacher's expectations, for example, in mathematics. The structure of the numeracy strategy is maintained effectively, ensuring mental strategies are developed which challenge pupils to improve their speed of responses and apply their knowledge to practical problem solving. In most lessons teachers model the use of technical language well and in the best lessons the significant reinforcement and good use of questioning requires pupils to use the new language that has been introduced. For example, in

Year 3 the teacher ensured pupils used the terms 'imperative verb' and 'sequence words' and in design and technology, Year 4 pupils used the terms 'reflective' and 'purpose' as they shared the strengths and weaknesses of their designs and the materials they used.

25. Where teaching is mainly satisfactory, staff do not yet have nationally recognised qualifications and are less experienced in the teaching of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The required support and training is being provided. A strength in the appointment of a teacher from Nigeria is the strong cultural enrichment which enhances the quality of teaching. At the end of one lesson pupils' enthusiasm and interest was evident as they pleaded, 'Tell us a story, sing us one of your songs, teach us one of your dances'. The school is maximising this opportunity to good effect and pupils were keen to describe how their teacher extended their knowledge of literature, traditions and celebrations. Across the school staff have good relationships with pupils.
26. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Qualified teachers and support staff work together well to advance learning. Strategies and methods for meeting individual needs are very good and arise after discussion between the year group teams. Specific arrangements for SEN pupils are well made in English and mathematics. In other lessons the quality of differentiation varies but the needs of SEN pupils are not neglected. The details of individual education plans for SEN pupils are well known to teachers and other supporters. Teachers' plans give good guidance to learning support assistants except in reception where the purpose of the lesson or activity is not plain enough and there is insufficient identification of vocabulary. Teachers and learning support assistants manage pupils very well. Support assistants make a good contribution to the on-going assessment of pupils' progress through written working notes. When supporting lesson introductions, they maintain the attention of the pupils unobtrusively and simplify questions when appropriate. Some help shy pupils to rehearse their answers briefly, enabling them to contribute confidently to class discussions.
27. The good teaching observed is raising standards. Consequently, the well below average attainment at the time of the last inspection and in the test results has now risen to average levels. The challenge is now to raise satisfactory teaching higher to enable pupils to make consistent progress across subjects. The focus on literacy and numeracy has been effective and now needs to be extended to improve confidence and knowledge in subjects such as ICT, science and history. Teachers do not yet maximise the opportunities to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy through the broader range of subjects to provide a more varied and interesting timetable. For example, in an art lesson the teacher engaged pupils' interest in portraits. She analysed differences in styles and composition well but there were missed opportunities to reinforce pupils' knowledge of artists' names, an aspect of learning which they find hard to recall.
28. The sampling of pupils' work showed some good examples of marking which tell pupils what they need to do next to improve, for example in Year 4 and some classes in Years 1 and 2. The weakness is the inconsistent quality across all classes. While broad targets for achievement are set and lesson objectives are clearly planned and communicated, teachers rarely set precise targets for learning with pupils. This is an area of weakness that the school is aware it needs to address.

29. Teachers expect pupils to write neatly and consequently presentation is of good quality. Even in drafted work pupils draw labelled diagrams and models which set out their thoughts and ideas in a logical manner, for example, designing a night light and planning investigations in science.
30. Behaviour management is mainly good and teachers use questioning approaches skilfully to maintain the attention of challenging pupils and to reinforce their expectations of pupils to listen and share information collaboratively. Where these approaches are not consistently applied the pace of the lesson slows as interruptions, caused by pupils intent on making their own contributions, disturb the flow of the lesson. The unsatisfactory management of pupils' behaviour by supply and temporary staff resulted in progress in lessons not being fast enough. There was too much talking and calling out and the teachers were not sufficiently skilled to reinforce expectations positively and effectively.
31. There has been good improvement in developing the use of support staff in the infant and junior classes since the last report. Staff are included in planning meetings, are aware of how they are expected to support pupils to achieve the learning objectives and make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. They provide calm reassurance and enable pupils to achieve their best. The weakness lies in the lack of precise direction given to support staff in the foundation stage of learning. While they support children in their creative tasks and hear pupils read regularly, they receive insufficient guidance from teachers to enable them to make a greater contribution to teaching and learning.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS

32. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There has been a good improvement in the quality of the school's curricular provision since the previous inspection, including the provision for collective worship. The staff have successfully addressed the key issue related to developing a curriculum framework. Considerable attention has been given to establishing procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and this has been effective in raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics. In both these subjects work is now carefully planned to match the full range of pupils' abilities. However, in other subjects, including science, information technology and religious education, there is not the same depth of planning to address the different needs of the pupils. The lack of extension activities for the more able pupils can restrict their progress in these subjects.
33. The strategies for teaching the basic skills in literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and a good emphasis is given to teaching these subjects. This has had a positive effect on raising standards and achievement in English and mathematics. The school has rightly given a high priority to English and mathematics. As a consequence of this, the time available to cover other subjects has been affected. Some of these subjects, such as science, geography and history are taught in long blocks of time during the week. Although there is proper coverage of the curriculum, lessons are very demanding for some pupils, particularly the younger ones. They find it difficult to sustain their concentration for such a long period and on occasions become less attentive. Timetabling arrangements are not as effective as they could be. The school is beginning to link

the teaching of literacy and mathematics to other subjects but has not investigated fully the benefits of structuring the timetable to provide a balanced programme which meets the requirements of literacy and numeracy sessions alongside shorter periods of learning which provide more varied and frequent opportunities for practical and creative learning.

34. Provision for ensuring that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school is good. There is a shared commitment to equal opportunities evident in many aspects of school life and, for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those with English as an additional language (EAL), it is particularly effective. The curriculum offers very good opportunities for pupils with SEN and these contribute to the very good progress they make. Most pupils with SEN receive some enhancement to support learning, particularly in literacy lessons. Some pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties experience problems from time to time. When their behaviour is likely to prevent other pupils from learning, short withdrawal periods accompanied by adult support ensure all pupils receive their curriculum entitlement. Withdrawal for small group work is carefully timetabled so SEN pupils receive their curriculum entitlement. Arrangements for withdrawal are reviewed termly and are often scheduled to match the parts of lessons when pupils work in ability groups.
35. The aspects of the curriculum which cover personal, social and health education are well developed. Considerable emphasis is given to promoting pupils self-esteem through praise assemblies, merit systems and "Student of the week awards". These celebrate pupils' academic and personal achievements and acknowledge their kindness and care for others. Talent shows are arranged to encourage confidence in performing skills and these are well attended and popular with parents. As one parent explained; "They give everyone a chance to shine." Provision for health education including drugs and sex education is appropriate and is usually integrated with work in other subjects such as science. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good and currently includes football, hockey, French and three recorder groups. The French club was set up recently and is very well attended. There is a very popular afternoon of football fun for Year 4 boys and girls held at a local middle school. The pupils benefit from these well-organised and energetic sessions.
36. The school has strong links with the community and pupils are involved in supporting the older residents through visits and gifts at harvest time. The school is used by local groups such as the Brownies and Cubs and provides the venue for the "Ark". This is a particularly successful initiative, which provides enjoyable opportunities to involve the pupils and their families in bible study. Visitors from the community include the school nurse, local vicar, the fire service and a speaker on Judaism. This helps to make different aspects of the curriculum more interesting and relevant for the pupils. Involvement in the Northampton Music Festival and the Derngate Schools' Christmas is well established and pupils benefit from the chance to perform in public. In their report to parents, governors rightly praised the pupils' achievements and good behaviour at these performances. Each year the school takes part in "Operation Spring Clean" which is organised by the local council and promotes care of the local environment. Arrangements for transfer to the next phase school are satisfactory and the school is part of a joint programme organised across the town. Pupils have the opportunity to visit their selected school before transfer and there are regular staff contacts. This helps pupils feel more secure and parents are kept fully informed.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement from the last inspection when the school's provision was judged to be satisfactory. Arrangements for daily collective worship are satisfactory. Interesting assemblies are appropriately linked to moral themes and religious stories. They include time for prayer and reflection. For example, in one assembly the teacher encouraged thoughtful participation by requiring the pupils to think very carefully before answering. Songs are carefully selected to promote positive values and the pupils' singing is lively and energetic. The praise assembly is very successful in developing pupils' self esteem. Pupils show great pride in their achievements and other pupils are very generous in their response. Spiritual development is well supported in other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to respond sensitively and sympathetically to the experiences of others, now and in the past. In a very well organised "Circle time" Year 1 and 2 pupils helped pupils to contribute confidently and sympathetically to discussions about what makes them sad.
38. The understanding of the difference between right and wrong is promoted effectively. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is good and the classroom rules, agreed with pupils, have a positive impact on maintaining these standards. Teachers set a good example by valuing the ideas and opinions of the pupils and provide opportunities for them to share feelings and beliefs. Parents feel that the pupils are encouraged to be tolerant, respect others and value individual differences. A range of charities including Night Shelter and Save the Children is well supported through fund raising events and the harvest festival. The whole school was involved in a very successful "penny trail" for Red Nose day. A local theatre company helps pupils to be more aware of the terrible difficulties facing refugees.
39. The caring atmosphere throughout the school and the very good quality of relationships contribute effectively to the pupils' social development. Each class has a set of rules displayed and these are supported by a variety of rewards and appropriate sanctions where necessary. For example, a system of individual merits encourages pupils to do their best in many aspects of their development. Pupils are required to undertake a variety of responsibilities including class and school duties. For example, older pupils are responsible for helping younger pupils with the registers. There are also playground monitors who organise the toys and games. Pupils respond well to expectations that they work sensibly and productively together and this supports activities in a range of subjects including mathematics, science and physical education. For example, in a Year 4 science activity, pupils benefited from a high level of co-operation within their groups and made very good progress in the lesson. School trips and residential visits provide an important extra dimension to their social development, for example, the visit to Yardley Hastings for Year 4 pupils and to Everdon for Year 3.
40. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to learn about their own heritage and traditions and about the diversity of other cultures. Subjects such as science, geography and history are well supported through a range of visits and visitors. For example, Year 3 pupils spend a whole day experiencing life as a Viking. They have the opportunity to make pots, quills and bread and meet a Viking chieftain. Other activities include a Victorian experience for Years 1 and 2 and a Tudor Christmas for Year 4. Studies of countries such as India give pupils insight into cultures and faiths other than their own. Parents feel that cultural differences are celebrated in the school and that empathy is positively encouraged. Pupils and parents take part in a range of special assemblies, including Divali and the Chinese New Year. The cultural diversity of the staff is used to good effect, for example in story telling and

dance. Class signs are also printed in the different languages spoken by pupils throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

41. Pupils are very well cared for, enabling them to feel extremely well valued and secure. The very good efforts made by all staff to make the pupils feel valued have a very positive impact on their attitudes and achievements. First aid arrangements are good. Good care is taken of the pupils at the end of the school day. The school is secure, and clean. The permanent members of staff know the pupils and their backgrounds very well and this allows them to provide very good personal support and guidance. Pupils in the reception classes are given good support to enable them to settle into school. The school is particularly effective in providing support for pupils with special needs or who are new to the school, especially those with behavioural problems or from minority ethnic groups. Arrangements with regard to child protection are very well established and effective.
42. The very good behaviour management policy, underpinned by the Children's Code of Conduct, is effective in promoting the good standards shown by the pupils. The policy has a strong emphasis on the use of praise and rewards and these are used consistently by all permanent members of staff to improve pupils' behaviour. The sensitive, thorough and prompt treatment of challenging or oppressive behaviour is very effective; parents and pupils have confidence in the handling of such issues. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very effective and enable the school to achieve levels in line with the national average.
43. While there has been sound improvement in the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress since the last inspection, several issues that were identified have not yet been addressed in full and there remains inconsistency in the application of procedures and use of assessment in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.
44. The school makes use of the national tests at the end of the infants and the optional national tests for English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is tracked throughout the school and teachers match the pupils' achievements to the appropriate levels of the National Curriculum. In addition, a nationally recognised reading test is used every six months. Teachers keep records of the work pupils have covered in mathematics and science and records of achievement identify what they have achieved. In addition, teachers keep their own records for mathematics and science and these vary in quality throughout the school. Records of achievement for religious education and information and communication technology have been created but are not yet consistently in use. There are records of work covered for other subjects but they do not provide teachers with enough detail about pupils' achievements to inform future planning.
45. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is thorough. The coordinator analyses data from all school tests to identify pupils' needs. Difficulties are discussed and a series of observations are made using helpful prompts to focus observations precisely. The use of standardised tests also contributes to identifying pupils' needs. Following this process a programme of work is devised which matches the pupils' needs very precisely. There is a thorough termly evaluation of progress that involves the coordinator, class teacher, learning support assistants and external support. Only one pupil has a statement of special needs and records are maintained meticulously.

46. The school sets broad targets for pupils in English, mathematics and social development, but they are not precise enough to enable pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Although some teachers assess how well their pupils have understood the work at the end of each section of learning for mathematics and science, there is too little analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in achievements to identify gaps in learning and adjust the curriculum. Apart from in English, teachers' marking does not inform pupils how to improve. Teachers communicate clearly the objectives for each lesson and pupils are clear about the focus of learning and the expectations teachers have of them; the weakness lies in the evaluation and review of improvements with pupils to enable them to recognise their success and develop a long-term vision of what they need to achieve next. There is no systematic, formal tracking of individual pupil's progress, although the headteacher and coordinator regularly review pupils' records for English. This means that teachers and pupils do not yet have the information they need to enable them to accelerate pupils' learning further. The school has already identified the need to improve the procedures and the use of assessment. They have purchased a database that will help to track pupils' progress throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

47. The school works well to form an effective partnership with parents. Parental support for their children's education is satisfactory. The overall partnership between school and parents has a satisfactory effect on pupils' attitudes to learning. Parents are pleased with the school and feel their pupils achieve good standards. A small percentage of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and responded to the survey. About a quarter of parents who responded to the survey were concerned about the level of homework, how well the school communicates to parents and the level of activities provided outside lessons. The inspection finds that information provided to parents is good. Annual reports provide well-worded comments about achievements and include targets for development, although sometimes these are not sufficiently precise. They are supported by good newsletters and information about the work pupils do. Homework is provided at an appropriate level and, where parents support their children, it enhances learning in literacy and numeracy. There is very little parental help in the classroom.
48. Learning support assistants help parents of pupils with special educational needs to support their children's reading at home. The headteacher and the special needs coordinator work together to create a relaxed atmosphere to improve continuity in learning and foster a learning partnership. Meetings are held with parents to enable them to contribute to the evaluation and review of targets in individual education plans. The views of parents are valued and involve reporting on their children's responses to success and the effectiveness of the reward system.
49. Although parents expressed some concern about the range of interesting activities provided by the school, this was partly linked to concerns about the national emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Inspection evidence shows that the range of clubs and extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils take part in a wide range of community events and attendance at music clubs such as 'recorders' is good. Attendance at assemblies and performances by pupils is good. Many parents hear their children read on a regular basis. The Home School Association works hard to raise funds. Although the school makes good efforts to involve parents in projects such as Family Literacy, support is limited. The school works very closely and effectively with parents and outside agencies to improve attendance and behaviour.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

50. The headteacher has effectively led school improvement since the last report. The thorough self-review identifies strengths and weaknesses accurately and supports development and planning. For example, the priority to develop the quality of teaching and learning forms a significant part of the plans for improvement. Coordinators of literacy and numeracy have led staff training and all coordinators now have opportunities to monitor teachers' plans and lessons and to review the quality of pupils' work. This has developed the roles of coordinators significantly. The headteacher and senior management team have worked in partnership with consultants for literacy and numeracy to identify weaknesses and raise standards. Funding has been appropriately applied to support priorities, for example, the development of information and communication technology (ICT) resources and training and the review of provision for the foundation stage of learning. The high number of support assistants for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those with English as an additional language (EAL) is effectively raising standards.
51. The management of SEN provision is very good and the precise setting of learning objectives, communicated and shared with support staff, is enabling these pupils to make very good progress. The special education needs coordinator is very knowledgeable, hardworking and works closely with staff at all stages. He works directly with class teachers to assess specific, individual needs and individual education plans are jointly agreed. These plans are well written and include an appropriate number of precisely focused targets. Support arrangements usually include a balance of class support and withdrawal. All sessions are planned in advance, quantified and assigned to specific support staff. Parental involvement is also carefully recorded. All parties take part in regular evaluative meetings lead by the coordinator and monitoring arrangements are very thorough. The coordinator is very skilful in developing very good staff expertise. He provides direct training, disseminates useful information from the national course he is pursuing and arranges specific training for individual staff. The increased achievements of pupils with SEN is directly linked to the strength of the provision. The coordinator has some release time from class responsibilities to carry out the role. The quality of development planning is very good. He has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is about to provide an in depth analysis of outcomes using a newly installed data analysis programme. Links to the school development plan are sound. The school has a clear policy, which is to be updated when the new national code of practice for SEN pupils is published. There is no written statement on inclusion in the policy though it is very much part of the ethos.
52. School improvement planning, criticised in the last report is now of good quality and identifies current priorities, responsibilities and timescales for achievement. It is linked carefully to budget planning and is drawn up in consultation with staff and governors. There is a shared understanding of how the school has moved forward and of future priorities. Governors give good support and, when they can, they spend time in school, for example talking to coordinators and visiting lessons. The committee structure is effective and a file of documentation, meticulously organised, provides a very good record of the work of the governors. The curriculum committee is fully aware of developments in subjects and the committees provide good feedback at their half-termly meetings to the full governing body. They monitor finances well and have thought carefully about the impact of pupil numbers on the resources available for school development and organisation. They have a good awareness of standards and the rate of improvement in

comparison to similar schools, also of the specific needs of the local community. They are aware of the need to evaluate the school's work based on the principles of best value and while this aspect of governors' work is satisfactory, training has been identified to further improve the quality of work in this area.

53. Governors take part in monitoring in line with the school improvement plan priorities. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and financial planning and monitoring is thorough. The finance committee receives regular reports and meetings are held to review patterns of expenditure. Governors take responsibility for writing the annual report to parents and value the views of parents. The headteacher and governors continually seek funds to improve the condition of the buildings. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken to ensure that requirements are met. The school has undergone major re-roofing work recently that has also resulted in the partial redecoration of external areas. However, the external decoration of much of the building remains in poor condition.
54. The accommodation is spacious, enabling small groups of pupils with special educational needs to work within shared teaching areas or in the quiet rooms which link classes together. Resources for teaching literacy are good and include a good range of books and individual whiteboards. These resources are used well to support pupils with SEN across the curriculum. Worksheets, of good quality, are used appropriately. The use of ICT, including the introduction of talking books, is part of the development plan but at present is not developed sufficiently to impact on the provision for pupils with special needs.
55. Support staff work in partnership with teachers and are directly managed by the special needs coordinator with whom they meet regularly to discuss the progress of individual pupils. The high level of expertise and qualification amongst staff including the SEN coordinator, qualified special needs staff, LEA support staff and professional therapists all enhance the range of strategies available to support pupils. Provision is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

56. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- *Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - providing training for staff;
 - implementing the planned curriculum;
 - ensuring a regular timetable for the direct teaching of the subject; and
 - sharing the strengths and expertise in the elements of very good teaching observed as a basis for the professional development of staff. Paras. 4,10, 107-111.
- *Develop assessment and its use to ensure that:
 - the quality of marking is consistently high across the school;
 - teacher assessments are used consistently and systematically;
 - outcomes of assessments are used to set specific learning targets;
 - the needs of more able pupils are consistently met in all subjects.Paras 5, 9 ,28, 32, 43-4, 46, 75, 88, 93, 100, 106, 111.
- Review and support the quality of teaching of temporary and supply staff to ensure the provision is at least satisfactory. Paras 13, 17, 30, 112-3, 117, 122.
- * Improve provision for children in the foundation stage of learning by:
 - providing leadership which ensures that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities,
 - writing a policy to guide teaching and learning for the foundation stage,
 - ensuring teachers plan precise objectives for activities in all the areas of learning,
 - ensuring support staff know precisely the contribution teachers expect them to make to children's learning. Paras 3, 20, 26, 31, 60-67

57. In addition the school should consider the following minor weaknesses for inclusion in its action plan:

- Review the timetable arrangements in order to:
 - enhance pupils' opportunities for shorter spells of sustained concentration;
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Paras 33, 94.
- To enhance the quality of speaking, always insist that pupils pronounce words accurately. Paras 6, 70.

* Denotes that the school recognises the issue and has already incorporated it into its school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	18	25	42	7	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		79

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	19	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	23
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	38	38	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (93)	84 (93)	89 (93)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	38	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (91)	89 (93)	91 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	5
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	7
White	142
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Yr-Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5:1
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR-Y4

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	433,508
Total expenditure	435,658
Expenditure per pupil	1,886
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,910
Balance carried forward to next year	21,760

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	44	10	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	59	21	2	0
The teaching is good.	54	37	6	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	32	10	8	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	40	5	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	49	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	38	16	8	5
The school is well led and managed.	37	51	3	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	49	11	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	44	24	5	11

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. Children enter the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 children in the reception classes. The local analysis of baseline assessment results in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics shows that children's achievements are broadly similar to that of most four-year-olds. However, these results vary considerably from year to year and recently there are indications that the proportion of more able children is increasing and most have attended a nursery or local playgroup. Attainment on entry of the present reception aged children appears to be higher than at the time of the last report. However, a significant proportion has English as an additional language. Several children have joined the classes since September who require support to learn a new language.
59. The setting is caring and has a positive ethos. The teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. The children relate positively to their teachers. Most of the children achieve the levels of attainment appropriate to this age group. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Children's needs are identified at an early stage through teacher assessments and the support they receive enables them to make good progress.
60. The school has identified the early years as an area for development. However, due to long term absence of the coordinator there is a lack of experienced leadership in this area. There is no policy to guide the education of children in the reception classes and as a result the new foundation stage curriculum is not securely established. In particular, there is no agreed approach to the use of shared teaching space. This results in support assistants receiving insufficient guidance about the specific learning objectives of activities and the level of intervention required. Consequently, children are not gaining as much from adult interaction as they should. The weaknesses in planning and organisation result in good quality support staff not being used as effectively as they could be. While staff talk to children about their activities they are not guided to extend the learning when children are making new and exciting discoveries. For example, the specific vocabulary related to learning in each activity is not detailed well enough in the planning. Support staff were not involved in the teaching in classrooms during the inspection and this meant they did not have enough awareness of the breadth of teacher-directed tasks and activities.
61. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage of learning. Although teaching is judged to be satisfactory it should be remembered that during the inspection one class was taught by a supply teacher new to the class. In addition, the other teacher, while experienced, is teaching this age range for the first time. The expectation that the coordinator will support her professional development has not yet been realised.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. There is a broad range of development in this area. Most children reach the early learning goals by the end of their time in the reception classes so development is satisfactory. Most listen attentively to adults telling stories and giving instructions and follow directions obediently and sensibly. Children are given opportunities in

circle time to talk about matters of importance to them and also to listen to others. However, for some pupils this session is too long and they cannot sustain concentration. There is a missed opportunity to involve support staff so that groups are smaller and children do not wait so long for their turn. Teachers are supportive and caring. This ensures that children with special educational needs and English as an additional language are involved as fully as possible in lessons. Children are kind to each other. They learn to take turns and to listen to each other. They have opportunities for role-play in the "Home Corner". Expectations to behave well are consistent amongst permanent staff although on occasions some children are unnecessarily noisy. The children are cheerful and want to please. Teaching is satisfactory overall.

Communication, language and literacy

63. The children's attainment in this aspect of their work is likely to meet the early learning goals. They are confident, articulate and respond well to their teacher's questions. In all directly taught sessions, the children are encouraged to develop their vocabulary, to listen carefully and to show respect for each other's views. They recognise many simple words and phonic sounds at the beginning and end of words. They understand stories and can predict what might happen next. Some read simple text fluently and accurately. The children enjoy books and like to talk about them; they know what an author and a title page are. They can write their names and most copy the teacher's writing with few mistakes. They are beginning to understand sentences. The potentially higher attaining children are writing on their own and make good attempts at spelling 'new' words. The quality of the teaching is good in the whole class teaching sessions. Simple resources such as paper hats are used to turn a lesson on rhyming and blending into a game. The teaching of sounds is thorough and fun. The planning for this session is clearly focused; it takes into account what the children already know and extends it. The teachers make detailed assessments for English. As a result, children receive a positive introduction to language and literacy and many make good progress in this aspect. However, the planning is not sufficiently detailed to enable support staff to reinforce and extend the work that takes place through the broader range of activities. In particular, there is insufficient focus when hearing children read. Comments in reading records do not guide the development of specific reading skills or indicate errors that require correction. A significant proportion of children do not have a good knowledge of nursery rhymes and a small number need additional support to speak with clarity.

Mathematical development

64. Children reach the expected standards for their age in their mathematical development. Many recognise, count and match numbers and symbols reliably up to ten and are beginning to measure objects by comparing length. They know when they do this that the objects need to be lined up properly. They can also measure objects using a non-standard measure. The children are extending their vocabulary and can use words like tall and short. They enjoy the practical activities and carry out the tasks sensibly, working at a good pace. The direct teaching of measures was of good quality. However, daily mental number practice is not yet included in the planning and some independent practical activities were insufficiently challenging. Support staff were not involved in the classroom activities. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. The children's attainment in this aspect is appropriate for their ages. They know how to plant seeds and care for them by providing warmth and regular watering. They carry out investigations, for example, observing pink ice melting and colouring the water tray; however, gains in learning were limited as pupils did not have the vocabulary necessary to discuss melting and thawing. They use computers with reasonable confidence. The teaching is satisfactory overall but objectives for learning experiences are too broad and the language which children need to develop their knowledge through discussion is not identified in the planning.

Physical development

66. The children's attainment in this aspect exceeds the expectations of the age range. In physical education lessons and in the playground children move confidently, utilise space well, and show a good awareness of others. They travel in a range of ways, for example, running, jumping and skipping and vary their movements following the teacher's directions. They know that different movements produce different foot sounds and control hoops well to bowl, twist and to step in and out of. Their manipulative skills are also developing well. Children use scissors carefully and hold pencils and brushes appropriately. In the physical education lessons seen teaching was at least good. One lesson, led by the coordinator for physical education, was of very good quality. Activities are imaginative and challenging and maintain the motivation and interest of children. Children maintain good levels of concentration and persevere with tasks even when they find the movements hard, for example when turning and stretching. There is good access from the reception area to the outside play space. Due to poor weather, this area could not be used during the inspection.

Creative development

67. Pupils are likely to meet the age related expectations. During a music session in which children learned about echoes they repeated a three-note phrase accurately although they found the task more difficult when the phrase was taken from a nursery rhyme. They varied the pace and volume and repeated the rhythms clapped by the teacher. Children with special educational needs received good support to secure their inclusion in this well taught session. The children have opportunities for engaging in a broad range of art activities such as drawing, painting, modelling and printing. They paint enthusiastically, often making bold use of colour. They are introduced to different techniques and successfully used their fingers to paint flowers for Mothers' Day cards. There are opportunities for role-play including a doctor's surgery which is imaginatively linked with the idea of mending Humpty-Dumpty. Teaching overall is satisfactory. The weakness lies in the lack of precise objectives to identify clearly what pupils are expected to learn and the roles of support staff to provide the appropriate intervention and direction.

ENGLISH

68. In the 2000 tests for seven-year-olds pupils' attainment was above average in reading and average in writing. When compared to similar schools, performance was average in both reading and writing. A higher proportion of pupils gained the higher levels in reading than in writing. Teacher assessments in speaking and listening show that achievements were below average but an average proportion of pupils achieved the higher level. Trends over time show that standards are

improving. Comparisons of cohorts and from baseline assessment to the age of seven should be treated with some caution. The school has a much higher level of transient pupils than is usual and the proportion of pupils excluded from other schools and who are refugees has increased. The priority to increase the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher levels in spelling and writing is appropriate.

69. The most recent optional test results for nine year olds show that the improved quality of teaching is raising standards. Three-quarters of pupils reached age related expectations in reading and writing with a quarter achieving more highly in reading. The school has set challenging targets to improve writing which are likely to be met. The strength of teaching in literacy is the main reason for the improvements. When the work of pupils is analysed, those who have been on the school's roll since the last report have made very good progress and the weaknesses described have been addressed well.
70. While some pupils experience difficulties in developing their speaking and listening skills these are often pupils new to the school or those with special educational needs. In addition, many pupils who are bi-lingual or who are at the early stages of language acquisition affect the overall results of teacher assessments. These groups of pupils make very good progress because their needs are identified at an early stage and appropriate intervention and support enables them to make good gains in learning. Frequently, pupils who do not speak clearly experience problems with spelling. These weaknesses are mainly evident when pupils are not required by staff to pronounce words accurately in their questions and answers. This leads to inaccurate spelling in independent writing. Where teachers make good use of Standard English, pupils' speech and spelling are more consistently accurate. The majority of teachers model language clearly and speak in well-structured sentences. They encourage pupils to self-correct their inaccuracies and this enables them to improve their diction. In addition, the external support and that of staff who work alongside pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is of very good quality. Consequently these pupils feel valued, included and learn quickly. By the age of nine the majority are confident in their use of English and only need support to clarify the range of meanings of words in the English language and the correct use of tenses. They have equal access to the experiences planned for all pupils.
71. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Often groups are withdrawn from classes, for example in the infants, to work with support assistants who have been trained to teach the elements of the literacy hour delivered to classes at the appropriate level to meet pupils' specific needs. These small, well-focused groups benefit from very good modelling of reading which they are able to follow. They join in shared reading enthusiastically and attempt independent writing with increased confidence through the support they receive which encourages the application of phonics to spelling and the accurate construction of simple sentences. In the junior classes pupils also receive very good individual and group support. The staff follow the lesson objectives and provide the appropriate levels of interaction to support the development of self-esteem and confidence to succeed independently. This shows good improvement from the last report when support assistants were not appropriately included in lesson planning.
72. The focus on improving reading has been successful. By the age of seven pupils enjoy a wide range of stories, poems and information books. They are enthusiastic

and know the purpose of different books, using terms such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry in their descriptions. Their good knowledge of phonics is used well to decode new words. More able pupils read fluently and expressively and even those who are less skilled try hard to read with expression. By the age of nine many pupils read avidly and describe favourite authors and books, for example, Dick King Smith, Roald Dahl and J.K.Rowling. Pupils read fluently and accurately and their research skills are well developed. They understand how to use dictionaries and encyclopaedias and compare the styles of poetry introduced through the literacy hour. Reading diaries are well maintained and, where parents support their children to read at home, they make better progress.

73. Writing is improving and by the age of nine attainment is average overall. There is a good range and amount of writing in pupils' books in both the infant and junior classes and more pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve the higher grades and levels than last year. The strengths are the use of punctuation and progress in writing descriptive sentences that grow in complexity as pupils apply their knowledge of connectives, adjectives and character profiles. A small number of pupils use a restricted range of language that reflects patterns of speech that are not always grammatically correct. However, these pupils often require time to adapt to the different culture and teaching and learning expectations required of them. The very good programme of phonics teaching and precise setting of targets in this aspect of learning is supporting raising standards well. When teachers use effective questioning techniques, which require pupils to use a broader range of words, pupils structure more complex sentences in their responses and writing. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 4 the teacher used pupils' writing to discuss how the use of description created images. This evaluative analysis supported raising expectations higher. In the next piece of writing, pupils independently drafted their poems of 'Winter' following a late fall of snow. Their work followed a suggested framework and resulted in work of very good quality. They praised each other and their teacher recognising how she had improved their confidence and skills in writing poetry. The pride in seeing the efforts of every class member presented as a book reflected the value and respect evident in the relationships and commitment to improvement. All pupils say they like poetry and many choose to read poetry books, inspired by their teacher.
74. There is good evidence that the skills learned in literacy are being applied to other subjects. For example, in design and technology and science pupils understand the importance of making lists and labelling diagrams. There is now scope for more cross-curricular links to be made within the teaching of literacy. Another strength is the quality of presentation and handwriting. Teachers encourage pupils to hold their pencils correctly and to ensure that letters are even and correctly orientated. All pupils are encouraged to write legibly in a joined style from an early stage and consequently they take pride in presenting their work neatly. The planning process is well taught and pupils expect to draft and redraft their work, correcting errors independently. At both seven and nine more pupils are likely to achieve the higher grades and levels than in previous years.
75. While there are variations between classes in the quality of teaching it is very good for pupils in Years 1 and 2, satisfactory in Year 3 and at least good in Year 4. There are examples of excellence in the teaching of one class in Year 4 and another in Years 1 and 2. The challenge is now to raise the quality of teaching higher for the youngest pupils in the reception classes and in classes where teachers are new to the national literacy strategy and have limited training and experience of its delivery or of the age group they teach. Monitoring of lessons and the analysis of test

results, identify overall strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. At present there is no systematic use of teachers' regular assessments of pupils' progress to set specific targets which enable pupils to understand what they need to learn and to practise next to improve. With greater consistency and use of assessment, achievements are likely to be raised further. A good example of this process working well is in the teaching of phonics. Because pupils are clear about what they are to learn next and practise they make good progress.

76. While progress over time appears satisfactory compared to the baseline assessment analysis, it should be remembered that many pupils have made good gains in relation to their individual needs and prior achievements.
77. The subject has been well led and managed. The headteacher and co-ordinator have jointly led the improvements and shared the monitoring of lessons. This systematic procedure is ongoing. There is a good level of awareness of how to continue to develop target setting in the future, to teach literacy through other subjects and thereby provide a broader and more varied timetable for pupils.

MATHEMATICS

78. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' results were below the national average and dipped slightly from the previous year when they were average. At the time of the last inspection in 1998, pupils' results were below average. However, the actual number of pupils who achieved the average level in 2000 has risen since 1998 despite the growth in the proportions of refugees and transient pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the present Year 2 are achieving average levels. Pupils in Year 4 are also achieving standards that are comparable with other pupils of their age and about a third are achieving a higher level than average. This represents very good progress from the last report when the achievements of nine-year-olds were well below average. Children start school with broadly average mathematical understanding in the aspects tested and they make satisfactory progress throughout the school. This indicates a marked improvement in both standards and progress in the juniors since the last inspection, especially in Year 4 where the teaching is now consistently good or very good.
79. The use and application of mathematics has improved considerably and pupils in both the infants and the juniors use their knowledge of mathematical processes to find appropriate methods to calculate and solve problems. During the inspection pupils in the infants made predictions in practical situations, for example suggesting the number their teacher would reach if walking four steps on from the number 26. Their predictions showed pupils' abilities to count in twos, fives and tens while more able pupils counted in threes and fours. These challenges encourage pupils to gain confidence and to apply their counting skills in familiar situations.
80. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils used all four operations and brackets to indicate the order of calculation to reach a two-digit number chosen by a pupil, for example, $100 - [60 \div 2] + 2 = 35$. In other lessons pupils are expected to select the simplest and quickest method when calculating mentally. Pupils with special needs work in the same way and are encouraged to apply their knowledge at their own level. Pupils apply their knowledge of mathematics to other aspects of the curriculum. For example, in Year 4 pupils used their knowledge of multiplication tables to construct charts in which one square represented more than one object. In Years 1 and 2, pupils selected different methods to record the outcomes of an investigation in

which they threw dice to discover the number thrown most frequently. As they compared results they discovered that the reliability increased as the number of throws increased. This concept of fair testing was continued in the science lesson later in the day. All teachers encourage pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL), to use mathematical vocabulary. In the infants, pupils refer to the “horizontal and vertical axes” while in Year 4 they talk of “fields” and “frequency”.

81. The emphasis on mental arithmetic at the beginning of each lesson, an integral part of the national numeracy strategy, has had a positive impact on pupils’ numeracy, especially in the juniors where there has been considerable improvement in standards since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 add and subtract within 100 and more able pupils work with larger numbers. They find patterns of twos, fives and tens and are beginning to identify doubles and near doubles. Some pupils are beginning to understand the idea of place value and accurately identify the value of digits in two-digit numbers. They solve money problems up to one pound and add and subtract whole pounds. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special needs use the same processes as the rest of their year group, but their work is adapted well to meet their needs. By Year 4, pupils solve written problems using several steps including multiplication and division, often working with four or five-digit numerals. They sort fractions in order of size and use decimals to solve money problems. Pupils round up or down to the nearest 10 or 100 and are beginning to use negative numbers when measuring temperature and solving mental problems. All pupils understand the relationship between addition and subtraction and most know how to check their calculations.
82. More able pupils in Year 2 know some of the properties of regular flat shapes and describe the similarities and differences between a square and a rectangle. Lower-attaining pupils name the shapes accurately. They use standard measures when weighing and measuring and compare measures to find the heaviest or shortest set of objects. By Year 4, pupils recognise reflective symmetry and draw axes of symmetry. They compare analogue and digital measures and use both analogue and digital clocks to read time. Pupils calculate the perimeter of regular shapes and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to understand how formulae are used. These pupils find the area by multiplying the length and the width of a rectangle while lower-attaining pupils count the internal squares on centimetre-squared paper. Most pupils know the differences between different types of triangles and have a good understanding of position. They have programmed the computer to draw a route using “Logo” and the most competent pupils program repeated movements to create complete shapes. Pupils understand how the points of a compass support directions and movement.
83. All pupils In Year 2 record information using simple block graphs and tally charts and interpret information accurately. By Year 4, pupils organise data in a variety of ways including pie charts that display proportions. They are beginning to select the most appropriate way of displaying data to access specific information and understand that different charts are more appropriate for some audiences. For younger pupils, for example, they know that a pictogram is readily understood and that more complicated styles of recording would not be appropriate. The work they cover in their mathematics lessons is reinforced in information and communication technology lessons where pupils use a database to store and display their information in different ways.

84. Pupils with SEN make very good progress because additional materials are provided and the support from non-teaching staff and teachers is well matched. Many pupils who had below average attainment when they started school achieve average levels by the time they leave. Pupils who enter school after the age of five also make very good progress, especially those who find concentration difficult. This is because of the unobtrusive calm guidance adults provide in most lessons. The support for pupils who have EAL is also very good and there is little difference in their mathematical achievements and those of the majority of pupils by the age of nine.
85. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. All lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions. Teachers direct questions to individuals that are appropriate for their abilities. All teachers make sure that questions require pupils to apply their knowledge and skills. This makes lessons interesting and pupils feel their contributions are valued. Pupils usually work well together in pairs and groups and look after equipment and their own exercise books carefully. Pupils relish challenge. In the best lessons, where the teachers' expectations are very high, pupils work with great enthusiasm. In one Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils had a limited time to select the fields, methods and frequency when organising data from a tally chart into a graph. There was a buzz of activity throughout the lesson and a real sense of pride as pupils achieved the task.
86. The quality of mathematics' teaching observed during the inspection was mainly good and never less than satisfactory. In almost all lessons the teachers had a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. The pace was good throughout and the work was planned to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. Teachers expect their pupils to work hard and provide plenty of challenge for all abilities. Relationships are very good. One teacher in Years 1 and 2 generated enthusiasm and self-esteem by asking questions which required pupils to describe the aspects of their lessons they liked best. The pupils talked through the process with him. Praise is used very effectively to encourage pupils.
87. Teachers generally ensure that the additional adults in the classroom are well briefed. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported very effectively. Where the teaching is less effective, the teacher is new to England and has not yet had formal training for teaching numeracy although she is being given appropriate support by the mathematics co-ordinator. The teaching has improved since the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching in the junior classes. Teaching in Year 4 is particularly strong and this is having a positive effect on pupils' achievements.
88. All teachers mark their pupils' work accurately, often backing this up with comments about their achievements. However, the marking does not inform pupils how to improve and does not set targets to extend learning. Some pupils are given long-term, general mathematical targets, for example, "try to be more accurate" but this is not consistent throughout the school. The school uses the optional national tests for Year 3 and Year 4 in addition to the national tests for seven-year-olds to identify how well the pupils achieve. Teachers record what their pupils have learnt at the end of the term or the year and some do so at the end of each module of work. The next step is to use these assessments to improve the progress individual pupils make by involving them in setting targets that relate directly to their individual needs and have timescales for achievement. Teachers' planning, expectations and the pace of the lessons have improved considerably since the last

inspection, but the regular and systematic use of assessments to inform both teachers and pupils of the next steps in learning still needs to be developed further.

SCIENCE

89. In the 2000 teacher assessments carried out for seven-year-olds, standards were in line with the national average and similar schools. This shows good progress from the previous report when standards were below what was expected nationally. In 2000, the proportion attaining the higher levels was average but below that of similar schools. Higher attaining pupils did well in two aspects of the subject, life and living processes and materials. In physical properties, however, they were well below the national average. The attainment of the current seven and nine-year-olds is average.
90. The teaching of science is satisfactory overall and pupils make steady progress as they move through the school. A factor, which contributes positively to their progress is the way the subject is now planned. Because teachers plan work together there is greater consistency across the classes. There is very good teaching in one Year 4 class which provides a very good model and is helping to raise standards. All aspects of science are covered in a carefully constructed programme of work that takes account of national guidance. Well-planned lessons make clear links to previous work and build on what pupils already know. For example, in their work on separating solids, Year 4 pupils made good use of their previous investigations when they learned how solids are changed by heating or freezing. In most lessons planning takes appropriate account of the different abilities in the class and pupils with special educational needs make steady progress. More able pupils make better progress when they are given the opportunity to carry out and record their own experiments. Throughout the school, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and this helps them to have a good understanding of the work they are covering. Teachers encourage the use of proper scientific terms so pupils build up an appropriate vocabulary. For example Year 2 pupils explained that the wind was a "force that moves things" and a Year 4 pupil correctly changed his use of the word "particle" to "crystal".
91. Generally the lessons are well organised and pupils develop good work habits. They are confident in handling equipment and in sorting out what they need themselves. There is a clear structure to the lessons. Pupils are used to making predictions before they start their investigations and are confident in explaining their decision. For example, in a study of the wind as a force, pupils suggested which ball was the most likely to move the furthest saying "We think the spongy ball, because it's light and fluffy." In one very good lesson in Year 4 the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm about science generated a high level of interest and confidence in the pupils. She used very effective questions and had very high expectations of what the pupils could achieve in the time available. As a result the whole atmosphere in the class was energetic and productive and pupils were highly motivated to concentrate and finish their work. They devised imaginative ways to separate different solids such as rice and pasta shells and were very keen to try out their ideas.
92. Resources are well prepared and are of sufficient range and quantity. The learning support assistants are used to good effect, although this is not always shown in the planning. The support they give to pupils with special needs and English as an additional language is good. Where time is used well the lesson moves along at a

brisk pace. However in some lessons pupils have to sit through a lengthy introduction and have less time then to carry out their practical work. Science is timetabled into long blocks of time in the week, usually in the afternoons. This makes it difficult for some pupils to keep their concentration and they become less attentive as a result. This is a minor weakness.

93. Throughout the school pupils' work is regularly marked and there are often useful comments about how the work is presented. However there are few specific targets set to help pupils improve except in Class 7 where they are well informed about what they need to do to next. Overall, teachers keep satisfactory class records, which are passed on to the next teacher. The method of assessing and recording pupils' progress is in the process of being reviewed to ensure a more consistent systematic approach. This will enable teachers to build up a more accurate picture of how well pupils are doing as they move through the school. It will also help them to see what needs to be done to improve standards further.
94. In the lessons observed pupils' attitudes were good when the quality of teaching was good. They are interested in what they are doing and try hard to concentrate and finish. They are keen to talk about their work and show enthusiasm and enjoyment. Relationships are good and pupils are encouraged to co-operate with each other and use the equipment sensibly. They share, take turns and offer support to each other in the group activities. In the very good lesson pupils respond very positively to the teacher's expectations that they value each others' opinions and ideas. In lessons that are too long, pupils' attitudes become less enthusiastic.
95. The staff have worked conscientiously since the last inspection to improve the standards and provision in science. They have been well supported by the science co-ordinator and she is keen to develop the subject further. She has a good understanding of what still needs to be done, particularly in developing a more consistent approach to assessing pupils' progress and setting them appropriate targets.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Very little teaching of these subjects was observed and no overall judgements about the quality of teaching can be made. Judgements about standards are based on the analysis of planning, pupils' work and display and discussions held with pupils.
97. Pupils say they enjoy the opportunities they have to design and make objects and to draw and paint. Their observational skills are a strength, reflected in their illustrations and the displays of pastel drawings of flowers. They like to make models and talk about the duplo monsters and space ships, houses and gardens they have constructed. They remember making a house which showed a ghost when the door opened after listening to a story. They know that labels help them to understand diagrams and have been taught how to use scissors, rulers and staplers. They know they can join materials using glue, tape and clips. More able pupils describe how a hole punch can be useful. Pupils recall making 'rabbit' cards with cardboard, joining limbs so it could move. They enjoy sharing good ideas and expect to help each other when they work in a group. They describe the importance of handling scissors with care because they can be dangerous.
98. During the inspection pupils in Year 3 were exploring the ways in which portraits of couples reflect settings, emotions and relationships. The teacher encouraged

pupils to look carefully at a range of pictures painted by artists such as Renoir and David Hockney. Pupils made good links between the expressions on faces and the actions within pictures to draw together the shared experiences of the characters. There was a missed opportunity to review the names of the artists and their techniques in order to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. They frequently find it hard to recall names and the limited amount of time they have for the subjects means that they need to revisit ideas regularly to retain these details. However, one pupil named Prince Charles as a famous artist because he painted country scenes and recognised that he paints for pleasure and leisure. Pupils' work met the lesson objectives well in both Year 3 classes and showed how they had built upon previous learning in which they had sketched one half of a portrait based on selected photographs in magazines.

99. By the age of nine pupils are able to produce their own ideas for a design, for example sequencing patterns for Greek pots and designing a night-light. They consider what has worked well and how their work might be improved. This is evident in their evaluative comments, for example; "I would make sure next time that all the coils are the same thickness." Pupils in Year 3 draw simple diagrams and plans to set out the materials they need and their designs before starting to make a Moving Monster. They practised using pneumatics beforehand with a syringe and balloon and in discussion gave clear explanations about how the balloon fills up with air and makes the parts move by pushing. They are aware of the different stages of their work and record these simply. Overall, standards are in line with expectations for seven and nine year olds.
100. Planning is linked to national guidance but there is no consistent format to assess pupils' achievements as they move through the school to systematically build on skills and knowledge. Although the coordinator monitors the coverage of the curriculum there is insufficient evaluation and assessment to support progression in learning and to ensure that pupils who have strengths in these creative elements of the curriculum are challenged fully. The use of sketch books is providing useful information about pupils' progress in art and design and design and technology but the quality of marking is not consistently of high enough quality to enable pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Variations in the work between classes suggests that some teachers are more confident than others but the subjects have not been recent priorities and there has been little opportunity for the coordinator to lead staff training.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

101. In geography, no teaching was observed during the inspection. Therefore, an overall judgement on teaching and learning cannot be made. Judgements on standards are based on the analysis of planning, pupils' work displays and discussions with pupils.
102. Attainment in both subjects is in line with the expectations for pupils aged seven and nine. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory. These findings are similar to those in the previous report where standards were described as being 'broadly in line'. Planning for both subjects is satisfactory and there are now guidelines covering all National Curriculum requirements. Pupils study either history or geography at any one time. The teachers use national guidance to plan the coverage from term to term. Appropriate links are made to other subjects such as mathematics and art.

103. In a study of houses and homes the seven-year-olds show an understanding of the local environment and the difference between life in Northampton and the countryside. They can draw maps which show the routes from home to school and understand the importance of symbols when creating their own maps, There are appropriate links to mathematics evident in the use of graphs to record the data they collect, for example, the popularity of leisure activities in the area. Map work builds progressively on earlier learning and pupils in Year 4 show awareness of the countries that would be passed through on route to India. They make appropriate comparisons between lifestyles in Northampton and Chembakolli.
104. Most Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of chronology and are beginning to make comparisons between the present and the past. For example, in a study of toys they produce good descriptions of the materials toys are made of now and in the past and the different ways they are used. By the age of nine pupils are developing a growing awareness of life of ancient civilisations such as the Ancient Greeks and the role of archaeologists in helping people to understand how people lived in the past. Good links to art are evident in drawings to illustrate life in the past and architectural differences in buildings.
105. In history, teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils make sound progress in the lessons. Work is carefully planned across the classes and in Years 1 and 2 it sets out what pupils of different abilities will be covering. This practice is not consistent and at times insufficient adjustments are made to cater for the range of pupils' abilities. However, pupils with special educational needs are involved sensitively in discussions and are given good support from their teachers. In most lessons teachers give clear explanations so pupils know what they have to do and why they are doing it. They use questions well to check what pupils already know and to encourage them to share their ideas. This helps the pupils to be more confident and to contribute to the discussions. For example, in a study of the work of Florence Nightingale Years 1 and 2 pupils were very keen to talk about the differences between hospitals now and then because of the quality of the teacher's questions. In one good lesson the teacher made very effective use of the pupils own experiences in hospital to bring the subject to life and they responded enthusiastically during his lively introduction. A brisk pace and clear time limits mean pupils stay focused throughout and finish their work. As a result they make good gains in their learning. Most pupils listen well and good use of resources such as a video of Viking life for Year 3 pupils, makes the lessons more interesting and meaningful. In some lessons the introduction is too long and the pupils become restless and are less attentive.
106. The co-ordinator realises the need for a more systematic approach to checking pupils' attainment and progress, as they move through the school. The curriculum for both subjects is enriched and enlivened by a good range of visits and residential trips, visitors and community links.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

107. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment in ICT was well below average and their progress was poor. This was directly linked to the provision for the subject. There has been a considerable investment in the subject over the last two years linked to an effective development plan. Delays in the delivery of new computers and the setting up of a computer suite have restricted progress. However, by the end of this academic year, all teachers will have received appropriate training that will enable them to teach ICT more effectively. As a result,

although standards are still below average overall throughout the school, there are some aspects of the curriculum in both the infants and the juniors in which the pupils reach the appropriate levels. All classes in the infants and the juniors have time identified for ICT teaching during each week. After each lesson, a trained non-teaching assistant takes groups of pupils from each class to the ICT suite where they practise the skills they have learnt. This is a very effective use of the school's budget to support the curriculum and helps to address the lack of skills experienced by some teachers at the moment.

108. The standards in the infants vary from class to class although the teachers' planning is the same for all three classes. In two of the classes pupils have a folder of their work showing an appropriate range of activities for the year. The other class has only saved limited examples of word processing and mathematics. However, most pupils in Year 2 use the mouse to drag and drop icons or text, matching text to pictures. They click to find options, for example, to play sound. Pupils make lists to sort objects, for example, by shape, colour and size. They use a program to draw and are adept at "filling" and "flooding" colour on their creations. Pupils often learn new tasks away from the screens due to the limited access to the computers. For example, during the inspection pupils had a sheet showing the "Colour Magic" screen and sets of cards with the icons for the pencil and paintbrush, the straight line, the flood fill and the rubber. They had to select the appropriate tool before they used the ruler to divide the page in two, the pencil and paintbrush and flood fill to draw a picture and the rubber. "Hands on" experiences in the computer suite followed each lesson. Most pupils have learnt how to save their work to disk. Pupils use commercial programs to support their work in other subjects using the class computers. Pupils do not yet use word processing with confidence and many are still not confident when naming the functions of keys like the space bar, enter and shift. Some have found out information at home to support their topics but they do not use the CD-ROM in school.
109. In Year 3 there are similar differences in provision. In one class, the recently appointed teacher is new to the National Curriculum. In this class there are limited examples of ICT work. In the other class, they have combined text and graphics using a publishing program and have experimented with text effects. They have manipulated sound with a composing program, changing the instrument, the volume and the pace. This they have saved on their own disks. There is little evidence of the use of word-processing or any independent use of computers for research. Pupils in Year 4 do not use either the Internet or CD-ROMs for research in school although some have access to the Internet at home. During the inspection Year 4 pupils used a database program to support their work in mathematics, entering data and displaying it in different ways. They have created graphics in the style of Seurat, linking with their work in art and used a repeating pattern to design a prayer mat for religious education. Pupils have written stories in the role of the Minotaur for history and have programmed the computer to draw a route using Logo, linking with geography. These are good cross-curricular links, making ICT relevant. Although much of this work meets the expectations for pupils on Year 4, the lack of Internet, e-mail and research skills makes pupils' overall attainment below average. However, there has been significant progress in the subject since the last inspection and the school improvement plan indicates how the weaknesses identified are being addressed systematically. Pupils with special needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) achieve as well as their peers, having appropriate support to meet their individual needs.

110. In the five lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was variable and ranged from excellent to satisfactory. In the most effective lesson the teacher supported pupils to talk through the learning process as they developed the skills to use the “straight line” and “flood fill” tools. He asked pupils to teach him the skills and by following their instructions exactly, pupils learnt the importance of precise instructions and the teacher was able to assess their understanding. For example, when pupils told their teacher to “use the mouse,” he put the mouse on the screen. The pupils were very eager to correct him, delighting in his silly mistakes. They learnt very rapidly as the teacher skilfully raised confidence and self esteem. The very good planning, high expectations and excellent relationships enabled pupils to make very good gains in learning. Their attitudes to their work and their behaviour were excellent throughout the lesson. In the parallel lessons, where the teaching was satisfactory, the teachers taught the pupils what to do and they completed the task appropriately. However, the lessons did not have the pace and sparkle that generates high achievement and enthusiasm. In all the lessons observed during the inspection, teachers made very effective use of the trained non-teaching assistants to enable all pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, to use the computers in the suite to consolidate their learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject, work well together and take care of the equipment. Older pupils are very enthusiastic about the computer suite.
111. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the future of ICT in school and the subject has been managed very well since the last inspection. The best use has been made of the available training and the distribution of the computers is appropriate, allowing for classroom use as well as a dedicated computer suite with Internet access. A further suite is planned for the infant area. The school has increased the number of multi-media PCs and retains older computers that are perfectly suitable for word processing and using programs. There are plans to provide the “Window Box” system throughout the school and to train teachers in its use. This will give access to a good range of support to deliver the National Curriculum for the subject. The planning is based on the government guidance for ICT and the school has developed a system for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress. This has not yet been used and assessment procedures are, at present, not yet satisfactory.

MUSIC

112. There were no significant strengths or weaknesses in either the standard or the provision for music at the time of the last inspection. Standards in music are sound throughout the school but pupils in Year 4 achieve a standard of performance that is above average for their age, as they sustain different rhythms in three parts, involving whole beats, rests and even triplets. They respond well to hand signals changing the pace and volume of their performance and identify word patterns to match the rhythms. In this particular lesson, pupils worked extremely hard and delighted in their achievements, bursting into spontaneous applause as they achieve the task. Every performance showed a marked improvement on the one before. The teacher’s expertise and excellent relationships ensured that pupils made rapid progress. As they returned the beanbags they had used to pass on the pulse of “Obwi-sana” the pupils burst into song unprompted, demonstrating their enjoyment of the lesson. This was an excellent lesson. An unsatisfactory lesson was observed in Year 4 when pupils were taught by a supply teacher who did not have good knowledge of the pupils. The teacher did not have high enough expectations giving the pupils a very low level task as they clapped in time to a piece of music. Her management of the pupils was unsatisfactory, mainly due to

this lack of challenge and inappropriate planning and pupils did not behave well. This lesson did not give an accurate picture of the pupils' achievements.

113. Pupils in a Year 3 lesson used the "Music Explorer" program in their information and communication technology lesson to devise a rhythmic pattern, adding instruments, amend and record their work. The lesson was very well planned and the teacher made very good use of the resources. The very good teaching enabled pupils to make very good gains in learning and achieve an above average level of composition. The teaching was satisfactory in two of the three lessons observed in the infants. Pupils were encouraged to listen to each other playing a phrase on a percussion instrument when sitting in pairs, replying in the same mood. The teaching was unsatisfactory in the third lesson taught by a part-time teacher, due to inappropriate management of the pupils' behaviour. In some lessons, non-teaching support staff sit with pupils with special needs and give them good support, helping them to interpret instructions and performing with them, giving them confidence.
114. Pupils sing well in assemblies. They are tuneful and rhythmical and sing with obvious enjoyment. The music co-ordinator is very committed and enthusiastic. She has very high standards and the school regularly wins the "Creative Classroom" competition for Northampton schools. The pupils perform at the Derngate Theatre in the Schools' Christmas Concert, and there is an annual performance for parents. Pupils attend the Northamptonshire eight-day festival of music and drama. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn the violin, taught by a peripatetic teacher from the Northampton Schools' Music Service. There is a good range of musical instruments and recorded music, including a selection from different cultures. The spacious music room is used well throughout the school. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Standards of achievement in physical education meet the age related expectations for seven and nine-year-olds. In one Year 1 / 2 class standards are higher because the quality of teaching is excellent. Throughout the school a high proportion of the pupils demonstrate good skill levels in gymnastics and games. Their control and movement are satisfactory in dance. Although no swimming was seen, records indicate that pupils achieve well in swimming by the age of nine. Teaching is at least satisfactory with examples of excellence in Years 1 and 2 and very good features in the juniors. This represents an improvement since the last inspection through the use of the scheme of work to guide lesson planning, good challenge for more able pupils and the teachers' skills to ensure all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL), are enabled to participate.
116. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use space well during indoor games sessions. They dodge whilst moving quickly and are still able to do this well when holding hands with a partner. Pupils can dribble a ball either using their feet or their hands and combine these two skills to evade the 'catchers'. In the lessons from which this example was taken the teaching was excellent and the pupils progressed at a very rapid rate. The teacher was very knowledgeable and had prepared his lesson meticulously. Skills were acquired quickly and correct techniques developed because the teacher provided excellent demonstrations backed by very clear explanations and examples for pupils to visualise.

117. Pupils with SEN are given appropriate support. Pupils who lack confidence or who are physically less able receive unobtrusive extra coaching. For example, one pupil who was unable to kick from the side of the foot achieved this skill with more confidence by the end of the session. The lessons, taught by supply teachers were unsatisfactory; behaviour management was ineffective and pupils chattering slowed the pace of learning.
118. By the age of nine pupils are able to appreciate the need to warm up at the beginning of a session. They make good use of space and create a smooth sequence using three movements including controlled balances. They work together as groups and produce sequences that are performed to the class. They evaluate each other's work and as a result improve their performance. Some of the comments relate to the beauty of aspects of the sequences and reflect pupils' sensitivity. Teaching in gymnastics is mainly very good. Very clear instructions are given and the purpose of the lesson is explained. Clear routines are established for handling apparatus safely, though pupils are not always reminded to make their own safety checks. One pupil with SEN shone because, with a little support from the teacher, he was able to work co-operatively with three other pupils to produce a group performance enhanced by his imagination and skill. In a dance lesson pupils talked about the qualities of different movements and developed a good repertoire. However, despite the good planning pupils spent too much time discussing rather than experimenting with movements.
119. The school uses a well-established scheme of work of very good quality that enables teachers to plan lessons to develop the pupils' skills and abilities in a consistent and coherent manner. The subject has a temporary co-ordinator who is a subject specialist and an excellent teacher. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities including football, cricket and hockey linked to national sporting initiatives. Through partnership with other schools and involvement in national and local initiatives pupils have opportunities to become involved in activities that are supported by specialist coaches, for example, hockey and cricket. The school has sufficient accommodation for physical education and is adequately equipped. There is also a large playing field and hard play area.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning and achieve standards that are in line with those required by the locally agreed syllabus at seven and nine. They are developing knowledge of religions, beliefs and practices, and how these influence peoples' lives. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are fully involved in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Some pupils with behaviour difficulties are given appropriate support to maintain their concentration during discussions.
121. In Years 1 / 2 pupils talk about religious buildings and ceremonies. They are beginning to understand that churches and other places of worship are important to the people whose religions they represent. By the age of nine pupils are aware of Christianity in action. They talk about recent visitors whose religious convictions influenced their choice of occupation and define charity and its relationship to belief. Many know that giving and helping are expectations for members of some religious groups and are symbolised in parables in the Bible for example, 'The Good Samaritan' and 'The Lost Sheep'.

122. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall. Work in books indicates that pupils try hard, complete work and are neat and careful in the presentation of their work. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen in Years 1 and 2 most pupils did not listen carefully enough to each other. There was a lack of challenge in the lesson particularly for the older pupils, so they became noisy, lost concentration and did not respond appropriately to the supply teacher.
123. Teaching is good in the juniors. The teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good. Their lessons are well planned, identifying clearly what the pupils are to learn. In lessons, the teachers successfully help their pupils to recall and build on previous learning, they manage the class well and make their expectations of the pupils' attitudes and behaviour explicit. There is a good pace in lessons and they are stimulating. Teachers use questioning very well to guide discussions and involve individual pupils. Drama is also used effectively to support the understanding of stories. Teachers help pupils to understand religious ideas by focussing on words such as 'charity'. They reflect on the impact of the recent National Comic Relief day on those who will benefit from the fund raising. They are encouraged to consider how the views of two popular children's presenters changed as a result of the commitment these people made to this charity.
124. Since the last inspection, the standards attained by the pupils have been maintained. Teachers assess the pupils' understanding and knowledge through their effective questioning and some are beginning to make use of a standardised assessment procedure. These are improvements since the last inspection. The lesson planning takes good account of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is a guidance document, based on the agreed syllabus, which effectively supports the teachers in their planning. The provision includes teaching about the other major world faiths and structures opportunities for pupils to build on their prior knowledge and understanding. The subject co-ordinator has been ill during the last academic year and senior staff have maintained provision for the subject.